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# THE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Fact Sheet  
**57**

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## ***What is the No Child Left Behind/ Blue Ribbon Schools Program?***

The No Child Left Behind/Blue Ribbon Schools Program is a national and state program that recognizes and honors elementary, middle, and high schools that exhibit high performance and/or significant improvement in student achievement. Up to six Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are identified each year by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). These schools become Maryland honorees and are recommended to the U.S. Department of Education for National Blue Ribbon School Awards. *Schools cannot apply for the National Blue Ribbon School Program unless they have been selected by MSDE based on the categories below.*

## ***What are the three selection categories?\****

1. Schools in the top 10% statewide compared against all schools at the specific level (elementary, middle, high), as measured by Maryland assessments (MSA's/HSA's) in reading or language arts related subjects and mathematics.
2. Schools with at least 40% economically disadvantaged students (as measured by free and reduced price meals or other determiner) that demonstrate dramatic improvement on state assessments over at least the past three years. These must be in at least the top 40% of schools statewide as measured by Maryland assessments in reading or language arts related subjects and mathematics.
3. Schools with at least 40% economically disadvantaged students that are in the top 10% statewide compared against all schools as measured by Maryland assessments in reading or language arts related subjects and mathematics.

\*One-third of schools submitted for National Blue Ribbon Awards must represent categories 2 or 3. For Maryland, two of the six schools submitted must represent categories 2 or 3.

## ***What is the application process?***

Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are identified by MSDE. When schools have been identified and selected, these schools are automatically designated as Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools for the year of selection. They then receive an invitation from the U.S. Secretary of Education to apply for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award. At that time, each school must complete a National NCLB/Blue Ribbon School Application. Schools not identified by MSDE cannot apply for National Blue Ribbon Awards.

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***What do  
Blue Ribbon  
Schools receive?***

A Blue Ribbon School is recognized as a highly effective school in Maryland and in the nation. This recognition means significant prestige in the community and the state and often results in increased values in neighborhood housing as well as other prizes and honors.

Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are honored by the Maryland State Department of Education and the General Assembly at a dinner in Annapolis followed by a General Assembly tribute. Winners receive a Governor's Proclamation, State Department of Education citations, General Assembly honors, and Maryland's Blue Ribbon Flag of Excellence. Monetary prizes are typically awarded to each school by MSDE.

National Blue Ribbon School winners attend a two-day awards program in Washington, D.C. hosted by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the President. They receive the No Child Left Behind/Blue Ribbon flag and an inscribed plaque.

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***How many schools  
can be selected?***

Up to six Maryland schools can be identified as No Child Left Behind/Blue Ribbon Schools by the Maryland State Department of Education on the basis of state assessment data. At least two of these schools must represent high numbers of disadvantaged students.

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***Who are the  
supporting partners  
in this program?***

The Maryland State Department of Education directs this program with support from the following corporations and government agencies:  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage  
Comcast Cablevision  
Peripheral Vision  
Scholastic, Inc.  
State Farm Insurance  
Verizon, Maryland